

HOW THE TRIPARTITE FACT WAS MADE.

Several questions were put to German foreign minister von. Ribbentrop but it seems that why I put these questions was not well understood.

Some time afterwards Mr. Stahmer was sent to Tokyo by von Ribbentrop.

I do not know the exact date of Mr. Stahmer's calls on me.

It was the early part of September seen after he reached Tokyo. I received him in my private house, which General Ott, the German ambassador and Stahmer visited, and after the introduction of Stahmer by general Ott, I started immediately to put questions. My first question was: what Germany thought of America at the time. Stahmer replied Germany wanted to avoid America at the time. Stahmer replied Germany wanted to avoid America's ever joining the war. Here I took the liberty of asking Mr. Stahmer from whom answers to my question were coming. I visited to know what authority Mr. Stahmer had in answering me.

Stahmer answered that I may consider his words as coming directly from von. Ribbentrop, the German foreign minister. There-upon I proceeded and put him further questions. I asked how Germany intends to deal with America after the European war? Mr. Stahmer replied that Germany intended to improve relations with America after the war and wished to be on friendly terms with her. Then I said, I'm anxious that Japan and America should never fight, and Japan must do everything humanly possible to avoid it. Japan's relations with America must be improved and readjusted. Japan wishes to see the most cordial relations with America in future.

I said further concerning Soviet Russia that Japan has been for years negotiating for a nonaggression or neutrality treaty at Moscow, but in vain.

Japan wishes to solve many outstanding and unpleasant matters between the two countries, and readjust relations. I asked Stahmer, was it possible that Germany could use good offices and help Japan in this score? Mr. Stahmer responded immediately that Germany would do so.

We talked generally about the war and the world situation. I remember it was about two hours or so and we parted. I reported roughly about this meeting to the premier, army and the navy ministers and they authorized me to proceed.

I met Mr. Stahmer and General Ott several times in my house and finally the German-Japanese pact (later including Italy it became Tripartite Pact as described elsewhere.) draft was initiated, the German side seem to have referred the matter several times to Berlin.

To recapitulate, the foundation of the pact was the Hakko-Ichiu old Japanese ideal, but the immediate basis were 1) to avoid the participation of a powerful country like America in the European war, 2) prevention of, or not to do anything by either Germany or Japan leading to American-Japanese War. 3) Germany to use good offices with Soviet Russia and help Japan to conclude non-aggression or neutrality pact with Soviet Russia and to readjust relations otherwise. These points must have been understood well from publication and utterance at the time.

In short, it was an effort to stop enlarging the theater of war and to prevent a real world conflagration.

This is why I said at the time that the Tripartite Pact was a peace pact and not a war alliance as stated elsewhere.

I may add that aside from the agreement Germany and Japan reached, I had other considerations of my own for Japan to wit:

1) To come very close to Germany to prevent of Berlin to directing the American citizens of German origin, to carry out propaganda against Japan with the aim of bringing about American-Japanese war. The American citizen of German blood and origin were said to number twenty millions or more, six millions of whom were born and later naturalised in America. Some of them are well connected with Germany, and have apparently harmless societies or associations such as amateur artists or theater clubs literally associations etc., which are highly organized and can be used as tools of Berlin. It was my opinion that if such mischievous propaganda is ever carried out, there would be no means of stopping it, and we would see an American-Japanese war in a half year. I trust anyone who study this point and followed it to its basis will agree with me.

2) To prevent the theater widening out to what we call Greater East Asia and to preserve peace in these regions.

3) To use German influence and good offices to induce China to directly approach and negotiate with Japan to end the Chinese incident. This was actually tried later on.

4) To put Japan and Soviet Russia on sound and good relations, so that we could approach there after America with strong and self-respectable attitude on one hand and sincerity and broad mind on the other. Thus I hoped, we could reach a peacefull understanding in the Pacific and on the Chinese question.



In approaching America, I made it a sine qua non that Japan should eventually but as soon as possible withdraw her forces from China.

When this could be done Japan, I thought in America's eyes, was in position to offer America Japan's cooperation in bringing about the end of the British-German war in Europe, although the fall of the second Konoye cabinet and my illness prevented me from any attempt at this latter part of my plan.

I considered the withdrawal of Japanese forces from China as the crux of the situation. If this not done America would not trust in Japan's sincerity. Yet this withdrawal of Japanese forces from China, was very difficult in Japan, and I was considering it, in the problem of approaching America, very carefully. A principle of my international dealing was that any promise given must be faithfully carried out, or else one should never promise.